



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/696,806	10/25/2000	Lisa M. Palmer	014208.1339	3178

5073 7590 07/19/2004

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
2001 ROSS AVENUE
SUITE 600
DALLAS, TX 75201-2980

EXAMINER

MCCLELLAN, JAMES S

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3627

DATE MAILED: 07/19/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/696,806

Applicant(s)

PALMER ET AL.

Examiner

James S McClellan

Art Unit

3627

W

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-12 and 15-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-12 and 15-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

SUPPLEMENTAL - DETAILED ACTION

Amendment

1. Applicant's submittal of an amendment was entered on April 8, 2004, wherein:

claims 1, 4-12, and 15-22 are pending and

claims 1 and 12 have been amended.

Interview

2. During a phone interview on 7/14/04, Applicant noted that the Examiner modified the rejection of claims 1, 4-12, and 15-22 based upon the changes set forth in the amendment filed April 8, 2004 and requested that the Examiner withdraw the finality of the rejection. The previous final office action is withdrawn and replaced with this non-final supplemental office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 4-12, and 15-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. (hereinafter "Anderson et al.") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,926,810 (hereinafter "Noble et al.").

Regarding **claim 1**, Anderson et al. discloses a method for organizing vendor information comprising: receiving data comprising a plurality of accounts payable items, each accounts payable item having an associated vendor name (see column 12, line 63, “vendor name”), the vendor name representing a business associated with a purchase transaction represented by the accounts payable item, wherein ones of the accounts payable items are associated with a first inventor name; and associating a first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, “vendor identification number”) and a second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, “vendor type”) using a computer with ones of the accounts payable items associated with the first vendor name; the first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, “vendor identification number”) uniquely identifies a single vendor associated with the first vendor name; and the second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, “vendor type”) indicates a relationship between the first vendor and a second vendor; **[claim 5]** the first vendor identifier (see column 12, line 64, “vendor identification number”) and second vendor identifier (see column 12, lines 64-66, “vendor type”) are associated with ones of the items in response to the first vendor name; **[claim 6]** maintaining a database (see column 12, lines 53-58, “database 66”) associating one or more vendor identifiers with the first vendor name; **[claim 7]** the database (see column 12, lines 53-58, “database 66”) was at least partially created in response to a database describing relationships between a plurality of vendor names (vendors are associated by vendor type); **[claim 8]** the database was created at least partially in response to relationships between vendors defined by a user of computer software associated with the database (vendors are associated by vendor type); **[claim 9]** associating a plurality of vendor identifiers with a vendor group (vendors are associated by vendor type); and **[claim 10]** the vendor group comprises a plurality of vendors

Art Unit: 3627

with a common characteristic selected from the group consisting of an industry (see column 12, lines 65-66, "vendor type, e.g., gas, electric, telephone..."), a product, an ownership relationship, a strategic alliance, and a joint venture.

Regarding **claim 12**, Anderson et al. discloses a system for organizing vendor information as required by the method of claim 1 described above in detail. Dependent **claims 13-21** are similar to claims 2-10 as set forth above.

Regarding amendment to **claims 1 and 12**, Anderson et al. fails to disclose indicating an organizational business relationship.

Noble et al. teaches adding a vendor identifier that indicates the relationship between vendors based on a subsidiary (see column 11, lines 1-24), joint venture, partnership, or an ownership relationship.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Anderson et al. with vendor identifier as taught by Noble et al., because distinguishing between subsidiaries allows an entity to better organize their databases with more specific information which allows more detailed analysis of the state of the entity.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed April 8, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

On page 6, third paragraph (continued through page 7), Applicant argues that Anderson et al. fails to anticipate claims 1 and 12 as currently amended. Applicant's argument is moot in

Art Unit: 3627

view of the new grounds of rejection necessitated by Applicant's amendment. Claims 1 and 12 are currently rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 by Anderson et al. in view of Noble et al.

On page 8, first full paragraph, Applicant argues that Nobel is not related to identifying vendor relationships in an accounts payable system. Applicant argues that Noble appears to teach a general ledger system that may be shared between subsidiaries of a corporation. The Examiner agrees. However, Noble states (column 10, lines 62-68) that the system may also be a accounts payable system as opposed to a general ledger. Noble provides the teaching of organizing the combined accounts payable system (column 10, lines 62-68) by the various subsidiaries of the organization. Therefore, in Noble's combined accounts payable system, each entry must identify the subsidiary associated with each entry and identification of the subsidiaries provides an organizational business relationship between the vendors (i.e. a subsidiary relationship).

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jim McClellan whose telephone number is (703) 305-0212. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:30 to 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703) 308-5183.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1113.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Application/Control Number: 09/696,806

Page 6

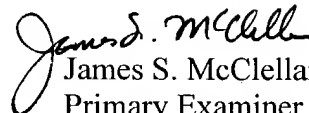
Art Unit: 3627

Commissioner of Patent and Trademarks
Washington D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306 (Official communications) or
(703) 746-3516 (Informal/Draft communications).

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive,
Arlington, VA, 7th floor receptionist.


James S. McClellan
Primary Examiner
A.U. 3627

jsm
May 14, 2004